

# **IDRC Corporate Program Framework**

**To the year 2000**

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## **IDRC's Mission**

Empowerment through knowledge

## **IDRC's Approach**

Knowledge is the key

*Sustainable improvements in human well-being depend on knowledge, its production, distribution, ownership, and wise application.*

Research is the means

*Research done in and by a country is vitally important for the production of knowledge needed for its development.*

People are the vehicle

*Development takes place when men, women, and their communities develop the ability to identify and solve their own problems.*

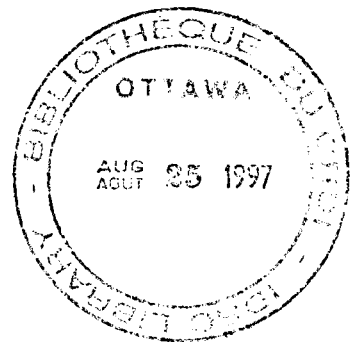
Sustainable and equitable development is the goal

*IDRC is pledged to the generation and use of knowledge in ways that alleviate poverty and improve people's lives.*

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March 1997

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## Linking People and Ideas

The International Development Research Centre is a public corporation created by the Parliament of Canada to help researchers and communities in the developing world find solutions to their social, economic, and environmental problems. IDRC connects people, institutions, and ideas to ensure that the results of research it supports and the knowledge that research generates are shared equitably among its partners, North and South.

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*Il existe également une édition française de cette publication.*

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## INTRODUCTION

*Between 1997 and 2000, IDRC will remain dedicated to improving people's lives through research and the application of knowledge. It will adapt its programs and operations to the changes in its working environment and complement other instruments and endeavours of Canadian international cooperation.*

### Context

Some five years ago, IDRC entitled its corporate strategy *Empowerment Through Knowledge*. It was predicated on the blunt assessment that development efforts confronted “an entirely new context” and that, as a consequence, such efforts would have to change profoundly. It outlined an array of new forces that would overturn the nature of the North–South divide and transform the functioning of markets, governance, social structures, and the environment. Five years ago, such assertions were greeted with scepticism in some quarters. Today they are accepted as axiomatic.


Sustainable improvements in human well-being depend as never before on **knowledge**, its production, distribution, ownership, and wise application. Research done in and by a country is vitally important for the production of knowledge that it can use for development. This requires a domestic scientific and technological capacity. Without such a domestic capacity, a country cannot even import knowledge effectively. An indigenous capacity, therefore, is a prerequisite for development. In this respect, the world is starkly divided: 88 percent of the world's research resources and capabilities are owned and controlled by the rich 22 percent of the population that enjoys two-thirds of global income. Over three-quarters of the world's people share the remaining 12 percent of research resources, and just as the global distribution is skewed in favour of the North, so is distribution in the South skewed in favour of Asia and Latin America. These regions have between four and eight times as many scientists per million people as Africa.

As IDRC seeks to redress this inequity in access to, and use of, research, the new **information and communication technologies** will play an important role. However, these technologies present both danger and opportunity. There is a real danger that the great gap in

wealth, technological capacity, and research resources between rich and poor countries will become wider through neglect or inappropriate application of the new information technologies. Poor countries are already being left further behind. This "information segregation" is dividing and excluding those whose links are already fragile. The **opportunity** lies in applying the lessons of experience so the new technologies are used — not as a magic fix — but as part of a package of interventions that is driven by the need to tackle specific human problems and that contains knowledge, training, and sensitive adaptation to local circumstances.

Canada takes pride in its place as the best country in the world in which to live, according to indicators that measure aspects of quality of life as reported in the UNDP Human Development Report. However, according to conventional economic indicators, Canada approaches the turn of the century knowing that it will not be among the G7, or even the G15. By these standards, many countries that are now described as "developing" will move ahead of some of the G7, including Canada. To continue to lead by example, while retaining its status and reputation in the community of nations, Canada will require compassion, commercial energy, global responsibility, and the knowledge networks required to develop effective policies. Public resources will still be needed, but fewer will be available and they will be increasingly oriented toward partnerships, joint ventures, and international cooperation rather than to traditional development assistance. Distinctions between public and private sectors will become blurred. In terms of scientific and technological capacity, Canada will no longer be among the leaders in overall capacity, but must find ways to remain at the forefront in quality, reputation, and access. Efficient and selective access to the **international science and technology community** will therefore be paramount.

**Canadian foreign policy**, as expressed in *Canada in the World*, establishes the appropriate context for the new direction of IDRC's program strategy. In an unprecedented affirmation of global interdependence, the document suggests that foreign and domestic policy are no longer distinguishable, and makes it clear that efforts to reinforce the prosperity of poor countries are as directly relevant to Canadian prosperity as are domestic programs. International assistance is regarded as "... a vital instrument of foreign policy." IDRC is specifically cited for its contribution to global security



through its efforts to foster progressive change in developing countries and its focus on sustainable development. The way in which the Centre empowers people of other nations to tackle their own problems through research is an eloquent expression of Canadian values and culture appreciated around the world. As a component of Canadian Official Development Assistance (ODA), IDRC contributes directly in its area of speciality — development research — to the overall purpose of ODA, which is “... to support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world.”

## Lessons

As the Centre has evolved, it has moved from an organization that defined its programs in disciplinary and sectoral terms to one that allocates its program resources to specific program initiatives implemented by multidisciplinary teams. This transition is on-going and IDRC continues to monitor it through both external and internal consultations and evaluations (see Annex 1 for a review of the first Corporate Program Framework). The Centre has incorporated a multidisciplinary approach to research support and management in order to reinforce its commitment to environmental sustainability and social equity.

Development assistance is human assistance that involves governments, communities, and people. IDRC supports the generation of knowledge for use in development. Over the last 25 years, as a result of success, failure, and persistence, the Centre's work has increasingly been determined by the following development lessons.

- \* **Societies build their own futures.** External support is often a necessary but not a sufficient condition for development; a shared set of values is essential for partnership to work. Few development agencies have the legal and institutional framework to facilitate genuinely disinterested development assistance.
- \* **Knowledge is the key, and information is no substitute for knowledge.** Understanding and ownership must be added to information to turn it into useful knowledge. In IDRC's




experience, understanding and ownership are derived primarily from the purposeful human interaction that is essential for successful problem-solving research. Development research is not a clinical, detached process: it relies first and foremost on collaboration between humans, on people sharing a common vision and an agenda of work to attain it. In the relatively impoverished conditions of Southern institutions, support for networking is essential to combat intellectual isolation and to realize the synergies that come from the free exchange of ideas and experiences.

- \* **Single approaches do not yield results — complex problems must be addressed in a multidisciplinary manner.** In Africa, for example, it is the combination of science, civil society, and community work that is yielding the most promising results. Rather than starting with one discipline and seeking to solve a problem, every attempt should be made to start with the problem and consider what knowledge from which disciplines can contribute to its solution. Science and knowledge generation form the bridge between policy and action.

## Foundations

*The cornerstone of the Centre's foundation is a commitment to improve people's lives through the generation and use of knowledge. The sustainable and equitable use of global and indigenous resources depends on equitable access to knowledge and research capability, and on men and women's direct involvement in their own social and economic progress.*

To improve lives through research and the application of knowledge, the Parliament of Canada created and empowered IDRC with a far-sighted legal **mandate** (IDRC Act, 1970) "... to initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world." In fulfilling this mandate, the Centre has concentrated on encouraging and supporting Third World researchers to conduct research in their own institutions and, in so doing, has assisted the developing regions "... to build up the research capabilities, the innovative skills and the institutions required to solve their problems."



The founders of the Centre also included in the Act the power to: "... establish, maintain and operate data centres and facilities for research." IDRC has used this power to create and strengthen information and communication systems, services, networks, technologies, and tools in and for the South. In this context, the **mission of IDRC — empowerment through knowledge** — i.e., helping to empower the peoples of poor countries with knowledge, represents an essential contribution to redressing the imbalances in global prosperity.

The importance and relevance of the mandate and mission of IDRC were recognized at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, at which the Centre was named as a lead organization in the implementation of Agenda 21. This led to significant changes in the Centre's programming and reinforced its global role in promoting **sustainable and equitable development**.

The new corporate program framework includes three strategic dimensions that constitute the main characteristics of sustainable and equitable development. These will guide the implementation of the program framework for 1997–2000:

- \* **more human development** — the "people" part of development, embracing political and social systems, systems of governance and local cultures, values, and religion;
- \* **better economic management** — based on the broadest definition of economics, including systems of allocation that enable individuals and communities to control and sustain their own well-being; and
- \* **sustainable use of the environment** — ways to use, conserve, assess, monitor, and manage natural ecosystems so that individuals and communities can benefit from their tangible and intangible values, while leaving these values intact, or even enhanced, for the benefit of future generations.

For 25 years, IDRC has fostered an indigenous research capacity in the South and has mobilized this capacity toward addressing the problems of human poverty, often in partnership with the Canadian research community. Through 6000 projects in 1000 institutions in 100 countries, the Centre has developed a myriad of contacts, many of which are linked through knowledge networks.

This constitutes an asset of considerable potential that provides Canada with access to a broad-based platform of expertise in specific areas of international development and policy research.

The relevance of knowledge generated by research and the effectiveness with which the knowledge can be applied are significantly influenced when **gender** considerations are an integral part of analysis. Research must take into account the differential impact that change will have on the lives of men and women. All Centre staff share responsibility to ensure that this is the case for research supported by IDRC. A focal point of expertise and funding ensures access to expert assistance. Efforts will continue to ensure that adequate numbers of women scientists, and scientists sensitive to gender issues, participate in all Centre-supported research and that the impacts of the research on both women and men are fully explored. As well, the Centre will continue to disseminate research findings on gender issues.

In Ottawa and in seven offices in the South, IDRC houses a **core competence** in a wide range of expertise and experience. IDRC's field presence provides an extra edge to its special knowledge and awareness of Third World research and development conditions. Program staff possess a broad range of talent across the natural and social sciences in such fields as economics, education, sociology, anthropology, health, biology, agriculture, ecology, political science, and information. This in-house capacity links the networks of researchers in the South. A recent tracer study of a sample from more than 4000 IDRC project leaders confirmed that close professional relationships between Centre staff and developing country researchers were essential to building research capacity and conducting applied research effectively.

*Despite* financial pressure, IDRC's field presence will be maintained, and *because* of financial pressure, cost-effective alternatives to the current arrangements will be sought. The Centre will explore the feasibility of greater devolution of program management functions to appropriate institutions in the South and explore new arrangements with Canadian partners.

These changes will be informed by a clear recognition of the heterogeneity within the "South." The Board of Governors decided in 1990 that IDRC would pay special attention to **Africa**. This focus will be maintained. Currently this is expressed in a number of

ways: more than one-third of program funds are spent in Africa; four of the Centre's seven overseas offices are located on the continent; and more than half of the program professionals overseas work out of those four offices. For the programming period, and beyond, IDRC is developing a major initiative on Communities and the Information Society in Africa to determine how information and communication technologies (ICTs) can most effectively be utilized to enable African communities to solve their problems and realize their development potential. The initiative will include areas of concentration in East, West and Southern Africa anchored in these three sub-regions. It is expected that this initiative will eventually attract significant support from other donors and the private sector.

Between now and 2000, IDRC will accelerate the steps begun in the early 1990s to change its programs and operations in **Asia**. This shift will recognize and adjust to the considerable research capacity in the region, its rapid economic growth, and the concomitant diminishing appropriateness of traditional North-South development assistance. The Centre will reduce its operating costs substantially and use its resources (grant money, reputation, experience, contacts, and knowledge) to catalyze and secure self-sustaining relationships among Asian and Canadian researchers.

The Centre's program and presence in **Latin America and the Caribbean** will be informed by similar considerations to those that apply in Asia, plus the special interests of Canada in this hemisphere. The regional office is strongly encouraging links between Canadian and Latin American NGOs, universities, and the private sector in both regions. These increasing links, in one of the fastest growing economic regions in the world, have resulted in a demand to share resources with other Canadian groups. Over the next few years, the Centre will consolidate partnerships consistent with Canada's increasing interest in the region.

## **Canadian collaboration**

The Centre's emphasis on connectivity in its program networks will include the establishment of much more direct links between the researchers in the South and the Canadian scientific and development communities, e.g., universities, private business, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the

International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD). In this way, Canadian collaboration by the year 2000 will be established on a completely different basis than in the late 1970s. During this period, developing countries asked for greater access to the science and technology resources of the North, but most Canadian applicants for IDRC grants had little or no access to information on suitable research partners in the South. The new IDRC networks will address specific problems and provide equal opportunity of access for any part of the Canadian community. We will still support specific cooperative research projects, either to enrich existing networks or to begin new ones. Increased opportunities for Canadians with a knowledge-based international outlook will allow them to contribute to, and benefit from, international research. As well, the Centre will give opportunities to young Canadian researchers, journalists, and interns to become involved in development research, either by pursuing their formal training, or through hands-on experience.

A further set of activities related to program development, corporate communications, evaluation, audit, gender, and research-information management, engages the Canadian scientific and development community in the work of the Centre. Overall, support for the full range of Canadian collaboration activities will take up at least 25 percent of program resources over the planning period.

It is also important to recognize that program dollars offer only a partial indication of the extent of Canadian collaboration. The creation of research networks as virtual research institutions will involve the Canadian research community to a much greater degree and at a lower cost than previously. This involvement will encourage higher levels and quality of scientific exchange with developing country scientists and mutual benefit in terms of access to research capacity and results. Program experience to date has demonstrated a wide range of expertise in Canada that is directly relevant to the Centre's chosen themes of concentration. The Centre will explore every avenue to connect this community more comprehensively to its networks.

## PROGRAM STRATEGY

In the face of the very real threat of global information segregation, we must ensure the sensitive application of information technologies to link the research talents of the South. IDRC will concentrate its programming in fewer subject areas and make every effort to **connect the participants in its networks** more effectively. These connections must first be made among the researchers of the South as they direct their attention to shared problems, and they must be made between that community and the vast information networks of the North, especially Canada. IDRC is supporting a project designed specifically to strengthen the electronic networking capacity of its recipient institutions in developing countries. More broadly, the Centre is also already supporting a program of electronic networking in Asia to foster collaboration in development research through the access, use and exchange of information. We will expand this work in Asia and support similar program efforts in Latin America and Africa. In this way, a critical mass of research resources, both in terms of quantity and range of appropriate disciplines, can be mobilized to bring about tangible improvements in human well-being. The connections between Canadian and Southern communities will bring significant mutual benefits and will contribute to providing Canada with a better informed and sensitive voice in the international community.

In this context, IDRC's **corporate objectives** for 1997 to 2000 will be:

- \* To foster and support the production and application of research results leading to policies and technologies that enhance the lives of people in the developing regions;
- \* To mobilize and strengthen the indigenous research capacity in the countries of those regions, particularly capacity for policies and technologies for more healthy and prosperous societies, food security, biodiversity, and access to information.

To achieve these objectives, IDRC will build selectively on past investments and program momentum, and by the year 2000, will:

- \* Fund **program initiatives** to consolidate or establish at least 15 major regional and interregional networks of research institutions that effectively function as if they were part of a single institution, connected among themselves and with the broader Canadian and global knowledge communities;
- \* Initiate and maintain support for at least 12 multi-donor consortia or **secretariats** (in which IDRC will play a leading role) dedicated to generating and applying knowledge to major development issues in particular topics, ecoregions, or countries;
- \* Attract funding beyond the Canadian parliamentary grant for at least 10 of the research networks, and find alternative ways to mobilize other resources in pursuit of the IDRC mission; and
- \* Explore new opportunities that may arise over the planning period.

In pursuing these objectives, IDRC has defined its programs in terms of development issues and the knowledge required to address them, rather than in terms of traditional disciplines such as economics, health, or agriculture. In this way, the Centre intends to practice and promote a holistic approach to the use of knowledge resources for sustainable and equitable development. We believe that the growing severity, intractability, and urgency of the problems related to global poverty justify the risks inherent in this change in the way the Centre approaches supporting development research. This thematic approach continues the Centre's search for effective ways to promote and encourage multidisciplinary research.

The broad scope of the Centre's programming is defined by **themes**. Six themes together constitute the programming framework under which the Centre will implement its activities during the next three years and describe the development issues on which the Centre will concentrate its resources. They address associated research problematiques, which apply somewhat differently according to conditions in the three main regions of the South.

We chose these themes in terms of their contribution to poverty alleviation and sustainable and equitable development, of the priorities of the developing countries themselves, and of IDRC's own expertise. They are:

- \* Food Security
- \* Equity in Natural Resource Use
- \* Biodiversity Conservation
- \* Sustainable Employment
- \* Strategies and Policies for Healthy Societies
- \* Information and Communication

and are described briefly in a later section.

Under the general umbrella of these themes, the Centre will fund research through specific **program initiatives**, which are the primary programming units and driving force of IDRC's programs. We will allocate program funds to these initiatives and not to themes; they will be managed by multidisciplinary teams from within IDRC. We are establishing the program initiatives as working networks, focussed on particular knowledge gaps and linking participating institutions with other relevant knowledge communities. Some initiatives are specific to a particular region; others cross two or more regions. Program initiatives need not be confined to a single theme. In fact, as they embrace a greater degree of multidisciplinaryity they can be expected to address issues that fall under several themes.

Annex II lists the fifteen program initiatives that we expect to be funding at the start of this programming period. Some of them will continue throughout the life of this framework. During the next three years, we will also establish a number of new program initiatives that we will identify through focused studies — **explorations** — of new opportunities.

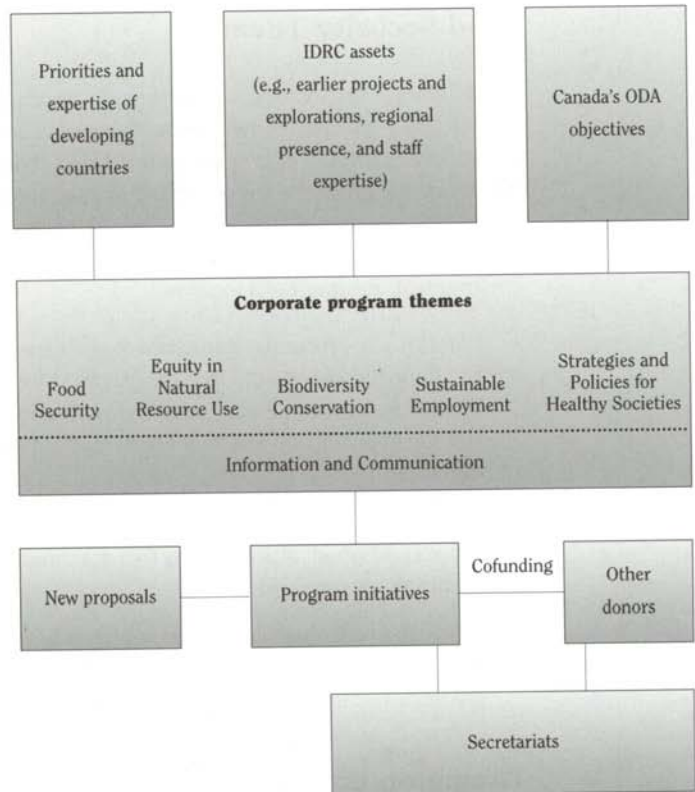
Figure 1 shows examples of development outcomes and benefits we expect some of the existing program initiatives to deliver by the year 2000. Figure 2 illustrates the relationships among the program initiatives and themes and the forces that have led to their creation.



**Figure 1.** Some examples of the development outcomes and benefits that IDRC will help to deliver by the year 2000.

- \* Economic policies that are sensitive to social impact: macroeconomic adjustment policies have serious impacts on vulnerable groups. All aspects of their welfare are affected — employment, health, and education. New policies to minimize these negative effects will be supported in 12 countries in Africa and Asia. Research will focus on the socioeconomic status, gender, age, and ethnicity of the people affected.
- \* Responses to soil degradation in sub-Saharan Africa: researchers will identify ways to reverse loss of soil and soil fertility and share this knowledge through a research network connecting the most seriously affected regions.
- \* Urban agriculture produces about 15% of all the food consumed on the planet and engages 800 million urban farmers. Research will aim to reduce health risks and increase the acceptance of this activity which will be increasingly important to adequate and sustainable nutrition in years ahead.
- \* Low-cost tools, methods, and indicators will assist those working to develop and implement policy reforms in health care, education, and social welfare and will be developed by a Canadian–Latin American consortium.
- \* In the Jordan River Basin, we will support the creation of knowledge about the trading of water and discourage conflicts over this valuable resource.
- \* The contribution of biodiversity to farmers' needs will be reinforced through plant-breeding systems in Asia and Latin America that will adopt participatory methods to conserve plant varieties.
- \* New production processes will be identified to allow small firms in developing countries to increase their profits and promote employment while protecting the environment.
- \* Research will contribute to ensuring that new information technologies are equitably shared among peoples and governments in developing countries.
- \* A network will provide a "one-stop" location for development research communities within and outside Asia to converse and exchange knowledge, and provide first time access to the internet for some partners.
- \* Reducing conflicts over resource use: slash-and-burn farming has been practised for centuries by tribal and hill peoples in Asia. Ways will be sought to improve traditional cultivation practices and to increase the income and self-esteem of these peoples in northeastern India, Laos, South China, and Cambodia. At the same time, environmental degradation and conflict with government will be minimized.

**Figure 2.** Program structure.



The Centre's program delivery is also closely linked to a series of **secretariats**, to which a number of donors have committed funding for a long-term research agenda. The secretariats ensure the pursuit of appropriate research priorities and the efficient use of donor funds. Although housed within IDRC, most secretariats are overseen by an independent governing body. Secretariats at the beginning of this programming framework are listed in Annex III.

## **THEMES**

### **Food Security Theme**

One billion people are expected to be food insecure by the year 2025. Rapid population growth and urbanization are leading to a greater concentration of poor people in cities and in fragile ecological areas. To reduce the stress on food-production systems, producers, the majority of whom are women in many areas of the world, must increase efficiency and reduce negative effects on the environment. Research will focus on:

- \* Efficient and protective management of fragile ecosystems, i.e., highland and mountain areas (Andes, Himalayas, and Eastern and Central Africa), arid and semi-arid areas (Africa and the Middle East), and rainforests (Latin America and the Caribbean);
- \* How to link commodity chains, from production to marketing and consumption, in such a way that maximum value is added to the commodity; and
- \* Urban and periurban agriculture, which is becoming a major source of food and earnings, but can endanger health and pit producer households against municipal authorities.

### **Theme on Equity in Natural Resource Use**

As population and incomes grow, sharing the world's resources among the men, women and children alive today, and between them and future generations, is ever more difficult. Resource-management policies and programs must become sustainable so they can continue to support economic growth, and access to these resources must become equitable so they can be tailored to particular regions and social groups. The Centre will concentrate on supporting research into:

- \* Resource-management policies for selected regions or countries that face a policy vacuum as a result of recent political disruption, as for example in Cambodia and Mozambique;

- \* Decision-making processes that integrate environmental, social, and economic objectives (as well as the constraints to integration), especially where ownership lines are unclear (as with common property resources) or where the ownership is divided (as with rivers and aquifers that cross national boundaries); and
- \* Ways of managing the multiple and often conflicting demands for water in the Middle East and Africa.

## **Biodiversity Conservation Theme**

Biological diversity — the variety and variability among living organisms — is the capital that we draw on to produce food, medicine, and industrial products. It is being lost at an unprecedented rate. The presence in Montreal of the International Secretariat supporting the Convention on Biological Diversity offers a unique opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the Centre's work on the conservation, management, and traditional use of plant and animal resources. Research will be concentrated on:

- \* The indigenous knowledge of aboriginal peoples and local communities and the institutions needed to protect and use this knowledge;
- \* Ways of conserving plants and animals through their sustainable use as food and natural products for income;
- \* How to maintain biodiversity while increasing the productivity of food crops and marine enterprises by involving farming and fishing communities; and
- \* Alternative models for intellectual property rights to ensure equitable sharing of the benefits.

## **Sustainable Employment Theme**

The creation of gainful and sustainable sources of employment for a young and fast-growing population is the critical challenge for most developing countries. As their economic structure changes, this means that millions of nonagricultural jobs must be created

in a climate of trade liberalization, global competition, and rapid technological change. Job creation must be reconciled with environmental protection, improved working conditions, and the participation of disadvantaged groups. Research will focus on:

- \* The policy environment for job growth in the late 1990s and options open to developing country governments in trade policy, macroeconomic management, and labour-market policies;
- \* Opportunities and challenges facing small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly strategies to promote innovation and improved environmental management; and
- \* The employment opportunities — positive and negative — of technological change, especially information and communication technologies and biotechnology.

## **Theme on Strategies and Policies for Healthy Societies**

Neither technical progress nor economic growth guarantees “healthy” societies, i.e., societies that satisfy men, women, and children’s basic needs for health, education, social integration, and security. Despite remarkable improvements in indicators of human development over the last 50 years, 1.3 billion people still live in absolute poverty and 1.2 billion potential life years are lost each year from disability and premature death. Strategies for preventing disease and policies for providing affordable and effective social programs are urgently needed. The Centre will support research at two levels: the identification, development, and assessment of interventions that improve people’s lives; and the promotion of policies to adopt and sustain effective interventions and programs. Support will be provided for research on:

- \* The development and testing of measures to prevent disease at the household level, e.g., improved drinking water and impregnated bednets;
- \* The process of public policymaking (identification of needs and the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies) for societies in which the roles of the state, the private sector, and NGOs are changing; and

- \* Experiences of success and failure in social reconstruction after civil war and social upheaval.

## **Information and Communication Theme**

This theme will have a special status: work in this area will both complement and support the other five themes. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are spreading rapidly, but there is still a large gap (and some say growing) between the “information haves” in the North and “have nots” especially in the South. The gap is particularly wide when it comes to actively managing and directing the development, adoption, and use of ICTs, as opposed to passively receiving them through transfers.

Nonetheless, ICTs have a tremendous potential for helping to make “knowledge connections” within and among developing countries and development actors — a potential that the Centre is committed to using to maximum effect. The Centre promotes and supports electronic networking and the effective use of ICTs throughout its programs, and in addition it will support research and networks on:

- \* Applications of ICTs in problem solving, decision-making, and knowledge access and transfer;
- \* Ways of extending the reach of networking and ICTs to meet the needs of grassroots communities; and
- \* Ensuring that networking and ICTs can be used to promote equity in development, for example through supporting policies to promote wide and democratic access to and good governance of information systems, and through research aimed at maximizing the positive impacts and minimizing the negative effects of the evolving global information infrastructure (and the present Internet) on the economic, social, and cultural life of developing countries and peoples.

For example, the work of the special initiative on Communities and the Information Society in Africa, which is under development, will address research, pilot testing and development action in these three areas.

## PROGRAM COMPLEMENTS

### Revenue Diversification

In 1991, the IDRC Board of Governors approved ***Empowerment Through Knowledge***, which contained the intention to seek diversified sources of financing. Since then, the Centre has experimented with a wide array of possibilities. Following a review of this experience and some exploratory studies, IDRC has decided to concentrate future efforts. The main focus will be on cofunding arrangements with other donors, thereby improving donor coordination and increasing the total volume of resources devoted to specific activities. This is an area in which IDRC has always been active. Sometimes, as in the past, the Centre will manage the contributions from others. A major new initiative will be launched to raise funds and other forms of support from the corporate business sector in Canada and abroad and from other philanthropic sources. This effort will be directed to those sympathetic with IDRC's mission, but channelled to specific program initiatives, not to the Centre as a whole. We have already tested the promotion of IDRC as an agency that can be contracted to execute projects for other organizations. We will review this experience before expanding it further.

### Corporate Communications

Scientifically sound and potentially valuable research can be ineffective if insufficient attention is paid to communications. The successful implementation of the IDRC program is highly dependent on: raising the profile of the Centre's work with key target audiences (government, media, research and donor communities, and corporate sector); communicating the research merits and the development potential of selected program initiatives effectively to a variety of possible funding sources; and ensuring that the products and effects of IDRC-supported research are disseminated efficiently and attractively to both scientific and lay audiences. These will be the main thrusts of the corporate communications efforts.



## Canadian Collaboration

We will continue to promote collaboration and linkages with Canadian institutions through a specially targeted set of activities.

## Research Information

One of the most important roles of IDRC program staff is to act as a conduit for the best sources of specialist research information to the Centre's main clients — researchers in poor countries, who are frequently isolated and lack the means to access databases. IDRC will complete the implementation of a new system, based on electronic imagery, to improve access to information in headquarters and the regional offices. Centre staff will thus be better able to provide access to information and intellectual support to their clientele through a variety of means.


## Evaluation

IDRC uses evaluation as a learning rather than a compliance mechanism. We share responsibility for evaluation throughout the Centre with the Evaluation Unit as a nexus to suggest best practices, build capacity, develop tools, support evaluation activities, and conduct Centre-wide assessments. The priority will be to expand *evaluation partnerships* within the Centre and with Southern and Canadian partners to enhance the learning function of evaluation. We will focus on promoting evaluation as a planning and management tool, building capacity for evaluation, and assessing the use and impact of research for development. At least one strategic evaluation will be completed each year to address issues of Centre-wide importance in areas such as the development impact of research and the building of institutional capacity. We will continue to support self-assessments of partner institutions as a strategic management tool, and will adjust IDRC's evaluation system consistent with our activities and the changing context. Information exchange and cooperation with other institutions and evaluators, both in Canada and internationally, will allow us to continue to be influential in the field of evaluation and to lend profile to the Centre.



## **Program Support**

Along with its technical expertise, one reason that other agencies have confidence in IDRC as an executing agency and manager of their funds is the high quality of financial and administrative support that the Centre provides. A large part of this is derived from the Centre's field presence. The Centre will take maximum advantage of new technologies and will examine ways to streamline administrative procedures, always ensuring that the highest standards of service are maintained, and that fiduciary responsibilities are fully discharged. Maximum program effectiveness and successful revenue diversification will be built on this foundation.



## **ANNEX I**

### **Brief Review of CPF I (1993–1997)**

#### **Evolution and Definition of the Corporate Program Framework**

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Centre underwent a period of strategic reflection, which culminated in 1991 when the Board adopted a new strategy *Empowerment through Knowledge*. The strategy reinforced IDRC's central philosophy that the capacity to conduct research is a necessary condition for empowerment and set the main directions and guiding principles for IDRC's future work.

Following the adoption of this strategy, the Centre underwent the first of two major downsizing and restructuring exercises in 1991. In 1992, IDRC was given an *expanded mandate* at the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro to be a major part of Canada's response to Agenda 21. Out of this confluence of circumstances emerged the first Corporate Program Framework (CPF I).

In its first two decades, IDRC's programs were defined in sectoral terms. Therefore, funds were allocated, for example, to an agricultural sciences division to support agricultural research projects. Since 1993, program priorities have been defined in terms of strategic development issues or themes. Six themes were selected for research support in CPF I. Each theme was allocated a percentage of total program funds. For the most part, the appropriations were close to the original allocations (Table 1).

Funds for research support were also allocated under several programs for sustainable and equitable development (SED) that essentially coincided with the program structure of the divisions and the responsibility centres within them.

In October 1994, the Board of Governors extended the period of the program framework by one year, to end in March 1997. Following further reductions to the IDRC grant in the federal budget of February 1995, the Centre underwent the second major restructuring and downsizing in the summer of that year. This

**Table 1.** Allocations and appropriations to themes defined in CPF I.


Themes	Allocations (%)	Appropriations	
		1993–1994	1994–1995
Integrating Environment, Economic, and Social Policies (INTESEP)	22.0	24.4	24.4
Technology and Environment	20.0	20.1	17.7
Food Systems Under Stress	19.0	21.4	21.9
Information and Communication for Environment and Development	15.5	16.1	9.0
Health and the Environment	13.0	9.6	12.4
Biodiversity	10.5	8.4	14.6

involved the abolition of the program divisions and the allocation of program resources to specific program initiatives (PIs) that would be implemented by multidisciplinary teams. The program framework was streamlined to capture the PIs within five themes oriented toward SED, and the separate SED programs were abolished. The range of programming was therefore considerably reduced.

The program framework that is in place in 1996 is radically different in form and content from that which prevailed in 1993. Furthermore, underlying that framework, some major institutional changes have been made. The organizational structure is now much more attuned to a program structure that responds to development priorities. Self-directed teams working on program initiatives are the main units of program delivery. Methods of working, reporting relationships, roles and responsibilities, and approaches to accountability and to budget allocation have all been substantially modified.

## **The CPF Review Process**

Review of the implementation of the Corporate Program Framework has been taking place on an ongoing basis through both external and internal consultation and evaluation. Regular contact between program staff and researchers, thematic workshops, project evaluations, and consultations between staff both in Ottawa and the Regional Offices have all contributed to the review



process. Regional workshops have been held in Singapore, Abidjan, and Lima to define the dimensions of INTESEP research, while roundtables on the Information and Communication theme (ICED) have solicited technical expertise and strategic responses of those interested in the role of communications and information sciences in development. In 1993, a comprehensive program meeting brought together all program staff for two weeks to review themes and to discuss project progress and operational issues. Subsequent meetings have provided feedback to the policy and planning process and helped set the directions for the next CPF.

## **CPF Results**

Outlined below are examples of networks and projects that illustrate some key characteristics of CPF I. A strong emphasis was laid in project development on networking with like-minded donors, stakeholders, and researchers, and this has remained a central feature of current program initiatives. The thematic approach introduced by CPF I reinforced the use of multidisciplinary processes, and contributions to policy research encouraged intersectoral consultation. The potential of new information technologies to link people and ideas has been developed in the Centre's work in all three regions.

- \* A major electronic networking project is the Pan Asia Network, which is facilitating access to information technologies and provides Internet access to researchers and institutions in several countries in Asia including Mongolia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.
- \* IDRC's International Network on Bamboo and Rattan has created commercial markets for rattan and bamboo products and has strengthened the preservation of tropical forests by helping preserve trees around which rattan vines grow. Additional funding from other donors is now moving the network toward the establishment of a Secretariat on Bamboo and Rattan.
- \* Social Policy Reform Networks have been supported in Eastern and Southern Africa and Latin America to investigate the adequacy of social policies and practices and to make recommendations for greater responsiveness to the needs of local populations in these regions.

- \* Researchers working on the economics of environmental sustainability were encouraged to work collectively on the research issues developing out of Southeast Asia. The resulting network is called the Economy and Environment Program in Southeast Asia — EEPSEA. Initiated by IDRC, the network is now a consortium of donors and research institutions working jointly on a program of research, capacity building, and policy analysis in that region.
- \* The Medicinal Plants Network (Asia) works in three program areas: biodiversity conservation, community empowerment, and alternative medicine. Started in 1994, the network has surveyed and documented traditional medicinal plants, developed cultivation and value-addition techniques for germplasm, and studied the manufacture and marketing of products. Phase II of support for the network will put special emphasis on the role of women in cultivation, collection, processing, and marketing of medicinal plants in Asia.
- \* A network on food systems under stress has been established in five countries of Eastern and Southern Africa to help individuals, households and communities to cope with problems of food insecurity. It is action-based and uses an interdisciplinary and participatory approach bringing together social scientists, natural scientists, community workers, policy makers and the food-insecure themselves.
- \* A multidonor effort was supported to develop indicators to monitor progress toward sustainable and equitable development. The case studies were in India, Zimbabwe, and Colombia. Each group exchanges with the others the research findings, tools, and indicators it develops. Participatory processes play a large part in this process because stakeholders in the sample communities define the dimensions of sustainability and equity that are applicable to their particular situation.
- \* Non-governmental organizations and research institutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America are working together in a global network on community use and conservation of indigenous plants and vegetables, contributing to better development and conservation of biodiversity.

- \* Elada 21, the electronic atlas of Agenda 21, was developed in 1993–1996 through information support from IDRC to individuals and organizations involved in the implementation of Agenda 21 programs. Besides providing valuable information to the public, Elada 21 helps policy makers document and demonstrate their decisions using powerful Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and hyper media tools.
- \* Canada's expertise in radar imaging was mobilized through a project that brought Canadian scientists in touch with counterparts in several Third World countries. This project introduced the participants to Radarsat, the first Canadian remote-sensing satellite, and to the use of radar data in natural-resource management. IDRC supported this global project with the Canada Centre for Remote Sensing, the Canadian Space Agency, and Radarsat International Inc.
- \* IDRC, in partnership with the Ford Foundation, initiated a project in 1995 to bring together several Palestinian NGOs and enable them to do policy research in support of the peace process and progress toward self-government.
- \* In South Africa, IDRC and CIDA have supported the transition to democracy by helping researchers to conduct policy research in economics, industry, education, local governance, and public service. IDRC is now contributing to South Africa's reconstruction and development, in part with cofunding from CIDA, by helping the government to develop policies in areas such as governance, environmental management, and science and technology.
- \* In January 1995, IDRC launched a mission to promote the introduction of biotechnology-based products in the Latin American market. The initiative is called Canada–Latin America Initiative on Biotechnology, Environment and Sustainable Development (CamBioTec). Priority-setting studies are being carried out in several countries and background studies are also planned to gauge the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of specific biotechnology applications in agriculture.
- \* More than 40 institutions interested in the Andean ecoregion are members of the Sustainable Andean Development

Consortium (CONDESAN), which is guiding research in the region on land and water management, agriculture, and small-scale entrepreneurship.

- \* Researchers in Kenya and Ghana, supported by an international consortium that includes IDRC, CIDA and WHO, have concluded that sleeping under bednets treated with insecticide can prevent as many as one-third of child deaths caused by the effects of malaria in Africa. The use of such bednets is now being promoted as an effective means of malaria prevention in endemic areas.
- \* The Vietnam Sustainable Economic Development Program, cofunded by CIDA, provides support for more than 50 projects in economic and environmental management and trade.


## Moving into CPF II

As the first Corporate Program Framework draws to a close, **an integrated corporate program** has replaced divisional perspectives. Comments from within the Centre suggest that during these last three years, a **multidisciplinary approach to research support and management** has also been incorporated. During 1994, program staff completed *report cards* on the CPF:

*The CPF made this (i.e., multidisciplinary) a defining feature of many new Centre programs. I think important strides were made in this area, which is an extremely difficult goal to realize.*

The **thematic approach** was seen as “*encouraging the coalescence of the intellectual and technical talent provided by divisions and regional offices around ideas that are going to make a difference.*”

CPF I, through its Agenda 21 mandate, also reinforced the Centre's commitment to **environmental sustainability and social equity**. During the last three years, the role of participatory methodologies in achieving these objectives has been acknowledged and supported.



## **ANNEX II**

### **Program initiatives expected for 1997/98**

- \* Acacia Initiative: Communities and the Information Society in Africa
- \* Alternatives to Poverty and Resource Degradation
- \* Assessment of Social Policy Reforms
- \* Cities Feeding People
- \* Community-Based Natural Resource Management (Asia)
- \* Ecosystem Health
- \* Foodlinks
- \* Learning Systems (Africa)
- \* Micro Impacts of Macroeconomic and Adjustment Policies
- \* PAN Networking
- \* Peacebuilding and Reconstruction
- \* People, Land, and Water
- \* Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) Innovation and Technology
- \* Sustainable Use of Biodiversity
- \* Trade, Employment and Competitiveness



### **ANNEX III**

## **Secretariats expected to be in operation in April 1997**

- \* Africa Technology Policy Secretariat
- \* Bellanet International Secretariat
- \* Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia
- \* Environment Management Secretariat
- \* Essential Health Intervention Project
- \* International Model Forestry Network Secretariat
- \* International Network for Bamboo & Rattan
- \* International Tobacco Initiative
- \* Micronutrient Initiative
- \* National Environment Policy Transition Project
- \* Office for Central & Eastern Europe Initiative
- \* Strategy for International Fisheries Research
- \* Trade & Industry Policy Secretariat



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